August 2003

The Official Publication of the United Transportation Union

Members ratify deal on IC

CHICAGO – UTU members on Illinois Central have ratified a new three-year labor agreement effective Aug. 1 covering 600 conductors and brakemen. In contrast with railroad mileage- and rule-based wage systems, this agreement provides for hourly wages, job guarantees and more flexible work rules. The IC operates from Chicago to New Orleans and also reaches Omaha, Neb., and St. Louis, Mo.

General Chairperson Warner Biedenharn Jr. thanked his negotiating committee “for their hard work trying to provide our members with a wage package that provides for sizeable increases along with job security and important work/rest benefits to combat fatigue.” Biedenharn said a “reversionary clause in the agreement permits a scrapping with job security and important work/rest benefits to combat fatigue.” Biedenharn said a “reversionary clause in the agreement permits a scrapping

UTU, DW&P reach deal

DULUTH, Minn. – A tentative three-year agreement, to become effective Sept. 1, has been reached with the Duluth, Winnipeg & Pacific Railway (DW&P) on behalf of UTU-represented engineers, conductors and brakemen. Details will be made available with ratification packages that will be distributed to members.

UTU Vice President Rick Marceau, who assisted in the negotiations, said DW&P general chairpersons Ed Kobe and Dale Slotness demonstrated “considerable leadership, patience and creativity” throughout the negotiations.

UTU cookbook simmers

CLEVELAND – The compilation of a book of recipes being collected by volunteers at the UTU international office to raise money for breast cancer research has encountered a slight delay, but the project is still underway.

Originally, volunteers at the international had planned to have the cookbook printed by a local printer; however, arrangements have been made to have the book printed by a company that specializes in producing cookbooks for fund-raising projects. As a result, the book may not be completed until this fall.

The book is a collection of favorite recipes and helpful household hints collected from UTU members and international staff.

UTU members and others were asked to contribute recipes dedicated in the name of a friend or loved one who had suffered from breast cancer.

Deadline for submissions is Aug. 29.

When completed, all proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to breast-cancer research as a tribute to those listed in the book.

UTU elects Boyd president; amends union constitution

ANAHEIM, Calif. – Byron A. Boyd Jr. was elected international president of the United Transportation Union July 28 at the UTU’s ninth quadrennial convention here, which ended Aug. 1.

Also elected were Assistant President Paul C. Thompson and General Secretary and Treasurer Dan Johnson.

Re-elected as U.S. national legislative director was James Blankenhoefer. Tim Secord was re-elected as Canadian national legislative director.

More than 600 delegates from the U.S. and Canada participated in the election of international officers and consideration of changes to the UTU constitution. All elected officers were sworn in Aug. 1 by UTU Past President Al Chesser.

Also, a former officer of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers was honored by delegates.

The following vice presidents were re-elected: John Armstrong, Roy Boling, Pat Drennan, Mike Farhey, David Hakey, Tony Iannone, Rick Marceau, Art Martin, Kim Thompson, Carl Vahldick and Bruce Wigent.

Also, Steve Thompson was elected vice president, succeeding Pete Patoskar who is retiring, and Bob Sharpe was elected vice president, succeeding Guy Scarrow who is retiring.

J.R. “Jim” Cumby was elected vice president-yardmasters, succeeding Don Carver who is retiring, and Roy Arnold was elected vice president – bus department.

In voting July 29, James Stem was re-elected alternate U.S. national legislative director; Don Tennant was re-elected alternate Canadian legislative director; Mike Canino was re-elected U.S. alternate vice president – commuter; Robert Gonzalez was re-elected alternate vice president – bus – west; Carolyn Scarsella was re-elected alternate vice president – bus – east; and Doyle Turner was elected alternate vice president – yardmasters.

Also, David Wier was elected U.S. first alternate vice president – east; Jerry Barton was re-elected U.S. first alternate vice president – south;

UTU seeks vote of running trades

OTTAWA – The Canada Industrial Relations Board has been asked by the United Transportation Union to certify the UTU as bargaining agent for more than 4,300 running trades employees of Canadian Pacific Railway.

In Canada, “running trades employees” is the equivalent to the U.S. term of train and engine service employees.

More than 73 percent of CP running trades employees already are members of the UTU or have applied for UTU membership.

“The open and overwhelming support shown by all of the running trades members prompted this decision to seek a single bargaining unit, which will more aptly protect and represent the interests of the running trades,” said UTU Vice President Guy Scarrow.

Amtrak future again in doubt

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Amtrak story continues to follow the plot of Perils of Pauline. As it has each year since its birth on May 1, 1971, Amtrak is struggling for survival.

Although powerful transportation committees in the House and Senate – and a strong bi-partisan bloc in both chambers – support providing Amtrak with the federal funds Amtrak President David Gunn says are essential to preserving a national intercity rail passenger network, the committees that actually vote the dollars are being as stingy as in past years.

Moreover, the Bush administration has sent to Congress proposed legislation that would effectively break up Amtrak and allow private operators to take over many routes. That is a recipe for union busting and the eventual destruction of
Local 161, Seattle, Wash.

Evergreen Trails employee wishes bus operator Rosa Angelos a full and speedy recovery in the wake of an auto accident that is expected to have her sidelined for up to nine weeks, said Secretary & Treasurer Wayne Ingersoll. Meanwhile, about 80 old and new members of the local socialized under sunny skies at a picnic in late June, thanks to the efforts of Local Chairperson Lem Austin, Kiki Garrison and Dan Bentley.

Local 375, Edgemoat, S.D.

Members of this BNSF local, as well as away-from-home members from Alliance, Neb., enjoyed a two-day “spring break” party courtesy of Designated Legal Counsel firm Hunmeg, Stone, LeNeave, Kvas & Thornton, said newly elected Local President Larry K. Barndt. Local Vice President and Bratwurst cook Bert Lee Overgaard, said Secretary & Treasurer Lenin A. Stein.
News from UTU State Legislative Boards

Massachusetts/Rhode Is. Retired Amtrak conductor and former UTU Massachusetts/Rhode Island State Legislative Director John Lazarovich passed away July 12. He was 70.

Lazarovich began his railroading career as a trainman with the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad in 1955. He joined the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen in 1956.

He served as the director of the Massachusetts/Rhode Island legislative board before his retirement in 1995 and, prior to that, had worked as an Amtrak conductor and served as the local secretary and treasurer and delegate of UTU Local 1462 in Boston.

A funeral Mass was held for Lazarovich on July 16 at St. Mary's Church in Walpole, Mass.

Lazarovich was preceded in death by his wife Marilyn, who passed away in 1996. He is survived by his son, Wayne.

Cards or condolences may be sent to the Lazarovich family at 71 Mill Pond Lane, Norwood, MA 02062.

Idaho

In an effort to thwart the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers’ ongoing struggle to get municipalities to ban remote control operations, Legislative Director George Mattow met separately with Pocatello city council members and Mayor Roger Chase to discuss remote control issues.

As a result, the BLE was unsuccessful last month in convincing the lawmakers to pass a resolution banning remote control operations in a Union Pacific railroad yard that lies within the city limits.

Mattow said he provided lawmakers and the mayor with a complete history of remote control and explained that the BLE’s efforts were really the result of a representation issue between the UTU and BLE that had already been settled in the courts.

He also thanked Local 78 President Mike Miller for the new leaders

The September quinquennial UTU convention, held in Anahein, Calif., is now history. Congratulations to all elected officers. The bus department strongly believes that you will continue to represent your members well as you have done in the past. All incumbent officers were re-elected except the vice president and director of the bus department.

Special congratulations to the new vice president and director of the bus department, Roy Arnold. I promise that, as an individual with union in my blood, I will do all I can to assist in the transition.

What I find interesting with this convention was that history seems to have repeated itself. Several events took place in the bus caucus that reminded us of events that had taken place with the bus department approximately 70 years ago. I certainly hope we are not regressing.

This bus department was kicked around for several years under different leaders until the delegate and directors of the convention voted to have someone that knows about the bus department be the vice president and director of the department.

Brother Kenny Moore laid the foundation for the department. Brother Kenny Moore was a former legislative director from left, are R.W. Gilbert, Assistant Legislative Director D.L. Miracle; Marshall, Chaudler, G.D. McFarland; Local Chairperson T.P. Ghoslon; Local Secretary/Treasurer W.W. Watts; and R.J. Don.

President of UTU Local 573 at Danville, along with Kentucky State Legislative Director R.W. Marshall, recently met with Ben Chandler, the Democratic Party’s gubernatorial candidate in this year’s election, to discuss issues important to UTU members. Chandler currently serves as the state’s attorney general and, prior to that, had served as state auditor. Pictured, from left, are R.W. Gilbert, Assistant Legislative Director D.L. Miracle; Marshall, Chaudler, G.D. McFarland; Local Chairperson T.P. Ghoslon; Local Secretary/Treasurer W.W. Watts; and R.J. Don.

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Texas

Legislative Director Connie English reported last month that he endorsed Democratic presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry around Austin, Tex., while the senator was in town to attend the National Council of La Raza at the Austin Convention Center.

English said that he picked up Kerry at a private airfield and escorted him to various events around Austin from July 12-13, including the conference for La Raza, a non-profit organization established in 1969 to reduce poverty and discrimination and improve life opportunities for Hispanic Americans.

He added that UTU National Legislative Director James M. Brunkenhoefer had offered to Democratic presidential candidates the names of UTU representatives in locations all across the country who would make themselves available to assist candidates when they were visiting various states.

English said that when Kerry returned to Texas a week later, he was escorted around Houson by Kenny Holman, chairperson of the Texas Legislative Board, who presented Kerry with a Texas necklace and a letter from English welcoming him back to the state.

“Sen. Kerry was very familiar with UTU and its legislative efforts and I appreciate the support he has provided to our organization over the years,” English said.

The BLE was unsuccessful last month in convincing the lawmakers to pass a resolution banning remote control operations in a Union Pacific railroad yard that lies within the city limits.

Mattow said he has already spoken with other city councils and county commissioners where UP is planning on implementing remote control and is prepared to fight any attempts by the BLE to have similar resolutions passed.

The resolutions banning remote control operations are largely symbolic as they are superceded by Federal Railroad Administration regulations and state and federal statutes.

Arizona

The Arizona Legislative Board, under the auspices of State Director Scott Olson and Board Chairperson Steve Coffey (1081), and with the assistance of National Legislative Director James Brunkenhoefer, was able to stop a legislative attempt by the Union Pacific to allow single-person locomotive operations.

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“The UTU was the only union that officially went on file with the Arizona Corporation Commission against the waiver request,” Olson said.

Kentucky

The UP attempted, through a request of waiver on remote crews, to send locomotives out of the yard without a second crewman, Olson said, in violation of Arizona state operating instructions.

After intense lobbying by Olson, Coffey and others, and calls from Brunkenhoefer, the UP withdrew its waiver request and the two-man crew was preserved.

“The UP was the only union that officially went on file with the Arizona Corporation Commission against the waiver request,” Olson said.

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Delegates changed the officer titles of the yardmaster leadership to vice president and alternate vice president. Holders of these offices must possess yardmaster seniority. J.R. “Jim” Cumby and Doyle Turner were unanimously endorsed by both the Council of Yardmaster General Chairpersons and the yardmaster delegate caucus to lead the yardmaster craft for the next four-year period.

The delegate body honored recommendations of the yardmaster bodies by electing these outstanding yardmasters by acclamation. The yardmaster craft can look forward to four years of great leadership from these fine officers.
Locomotive engineers will not be misled by UTU

A senior officer of the other rail labor organization recently told the Cana-
dian government that lies are part of the business of recruiting new members. Perhaps that explains why more than 73 percent of Canadian Pacific Rail-
way operating employees (called “running trades” in Canada) have signed
authorization cards to be represented by the UTU.

The other organization is at it again. In attempting to keep its Canadian
members from fleeting to the UTU, it wrongly asserted the UTU could not be
trusted to preserve craft autonomy.

At best, the other organization has a fundamental misunderstanding of the
meaning of craft autonomy.

If the UTU is sincerely trying to bargain for running trades employees on Canadi-
an Pacific, current local committees of adjustment in the various divisions of
the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers will remain intact.

Locomotive engineers will continue to have their representation. Their
general committee of adjustment will remain intact. The same committees
that have bargained in the past will continue to bargain.

Although required promotion and resulting ebb-and-flow in operat-
ing ranks has blurred craft lines, this does not affect craft autonomy.

Delegates displayed pride in our heritage, pride in our negotiating
skills, pride in our political
strength and pride in our unwavering commitment to serve
members.

Applauded by delegates were the
steps taken over the past year to
control expenses and balance the
budget of the UTU, which
was accomplished without cutting
member services.

Delegates spoke of the union’s
recent accomplishments, which
eclipse those of virtually every oth-
er labor organization.

Your UTU led the successful
fight for Railroad Retirement
reform.

Your UTU delivered a
national railroad agree-
ment ratified by an
unprecedented 75%.
That agreement gained
pay parity for post-
1985 railroad hires. It
ended forever – the
establishment of trip
rates being negotiated by general
committees – all career attempts to
increase the daily mileage rate. That
agreement also secured the future for
tail ground-service employees by tak-
ing control of new technology and
obtaining from carriers an unprece-
dented written guarantee of job secu-
rity.

Our union won from Congress $125 million in federal funds to
improve bus safety and increase training of drivers.

Your UTU won crucial
funding to keep Amtrak in
operation while Congress
continues the difficult search
for a long-term solution – a
solution that your UTU will
take a hand in crafting.

Delegates also spoke of
the need to stay the course in our
efforts to strengthen safety
laws, eliminate carrier harass-
ment and find a workable and
acceptable solution to fatigue – a
solution that balances the need for predictable schedules and off-days against an equally important need to earn an adequate income.

And delegates gave thumbs-up
to secure a new national health care
agreement for rail members and their
families that remains affordable – not
the less desirable plan carriers have
imposed upon other organizations.

Our convention demonstrated we are together as never before – that
nothing and no one will divide us.

We departed Anaheim re-energized,
resolved and rededicated to respect-
ing our individual craft by providing
our members, controlling our future
and delivering on our promises.

Brothers and sisters, there is no
question that your UTU is better
prepared than ever before to move
forward in solidarity to assure and
protect your future and the future of
your families.

One of the greatest victories experienced by the membership of this union
and their families was passage of Railroad Retirement reform. It allows some
15,000 career railroaders to retire early with a full pension and provides much
needed additional cash benefits to some 160,000 surviving
spouses.

Gaining congressional passage and White House signing of
this bill took every ounce of help we could muster. There was
always some group standing in the shadows trying to trip us
up. It was as if we were in a Three Stooges movie where one
of the stooges was trying to place banana peels in our path.

One group working especially hard against us was the
commercial insurance industry – but certainly not the United Transportation
Union Insurance Association, or UTUIA, which is union owned and union
managed. It was commercial insurance carriers that took the position that,
rather than career railroaders collecting more from the Railroad Retirement
account they spent decades paying into, those career railroaders should pay
more premiums for annuities and other supplemental retirement packages
from commercial insurance companies.

The commercial insurance industry made sizable contributions to lawmak-
ers such as Sen. Don Nickles (R-Okla.), who carried their water
in the Senate. When Railroad Retirement reform finally was
taken to the Senate, some thought that the Oklahoman senator
was going to break into tears. That’s understandable seeing that
Sen. Nickles is one of the largest recipients of funds from commercial
insurance companies.

Commercial insurance people are always ready to sell you a policy and take
your premiums. You may even collect benefits some day – if they can’t find an
exclusion that allows them not to pay. You see, these people are in business not
to pay benefits, but to make a profit.

However, there is an insurance company you can fully trust: UTUIA, whose
mission hasn’t change for 130 years. UTUIA, which is owned by its policy-
holders, who elect its managers, exists to provide union families with financial
protection against death, injury, old age and hardship.

An independent insurance-rating company concluded UTUIA is finan-
cially sound and price competitive with the 25 largest North American insur-
ance companies.

For every $100 in liabilities, UTUIA has almost $119 in assets, which
exceeds the liability coverage of many of the top 25 insurance companies.

UTUIA has a $350 million surplus of assets beyond its liabilities.

UTUIA is in business not to make a profit or to engage in anti-union activ-
ities, but to serve union families.

So when you need insurance for yourself, for your spouse, for your children
and for your grandchildren, doesn’t it make more sense to do business with your-
self? When you are contacted by a UTUIA representative, please listen closely.
The only people who will benefit from that policy are you and your family.
Debunking the common myths about Amtrak

1. Myth: Amtrak has operated in the red, at taxpayers’ expense.

Fact: All transportation is subsidized by American taxpayers (see Myth #2, regarding growing use of non-user funds on highways.) Singling out Amtrak assumes taxpayers do not want to invest in passenger rail. Polls consistently show that Americans support federal funding for a national rail passenger system. A Washington Post poll taken July 26-30, 2002, and reported by the Post Aug. 5, 2002, found 71% support for continued or increased federal funding of Amtrak.

Conservative Columnist George Will, in a June 4, 2003, column, said the poll indicated that “support for Amtrak is strong among all regions, ages, education levels and income groups.” A CNN/Gallup/USA Today poll conducted June 21-23, 2002, near the height of Amtrak’s funding crisis last year, found 70% support for continued federal funding for Amtrak.

Votes in Congress have demonstrated and again that the taxpayers’ duly elected representatives agree.

2. Myth: Highways pay for themselves through user fees.

Fact: In 2001, 41% of funding for highways came from non-highway-user fees (property taxes, bonds, general funds, other taxes and fees), according to the Brookings Institution’s Series on Transportation Reform (April 2003).

The share of funding provided by non-highway users has been growing in recent years. While most of the non-user payments are at the state and local levels, federal policy encourages this by offering states generous funding matches for highway investments but no match for intercity rail investments.

3. Myth: Amtrak carries only a half-percent of the U.S. travel market.

Fact: Where there is a strong Amtrak presence, as in the Northeast Corridor and New York-Albany, Amtrak dominates the airlines and offers a significant alternative to automobile travel. (Amtrak handles about 50 percent of all New York/Washington airline and railroad traffic. This calculation includes Newark/JFK/LaGuardia and Reagan National/Dulles Airports and these rail stations: Stamford/New Rochelle/New York/Newark/Newark Airport/Monterey; New Carrollton/Washington/Alexandria/Manosas/Woodbridge/Quantaico/Frederickburg.) In rural areas, where Amtrak’s infrastructure costs are insignificant, Amtrak is often the only transportation alternative to automobiles.


Fact: The freight railroads urged the federal government to create Amtrak and agreed to provide access to their tracks at an incremental cost basis in 1971. The case can be made for the opposite: that Amtrak subsidizes the freight railroads.

For most of its existence, Congress prevented Amtrak from contracting out work while the freight railroads reduced their employment rolls by contracting out as much work as possible, thus reducing the amount freight railroads pay into Railroad Retirement. Because Amtrak workers are “railroad employees,” they are subsidizing the freight railroads’ contribution to Railroad Retirement.

Today, Amtrak’s “excess Railroad Retirement payments” (about $150 million a year) is the amount Amtrak contributes to that fund for workers who were never employed by Amtrak.

If Amtrak were to go away, the freight railroads would be forced to pick up all the payments Amtrak makes into Railroad Retirement.

Amtrak also provides a training ground for some freight railroad employees (as well as commuter railroads, electric utilities and other companies), who are enticed by higher pay rates to leave Amtrak. Moreover, capacity enhancements designed for passenger trains benefit freight operations during much of the week. The newest example is restoring double-track on Union Pacific’s mainline just west of Sacramento.

5. Myth: Any dollar going to Amtrak is another dollar not going to roads.

Fact: Federal funds for roads come from the Highway Trust Fund, a dedicated long-term source of funding, whereas Amtrak receives federal dollars from the annual appropriations process from the general fund. However, states and local governments should have the option to spend transportation dollars on the most efficient mode of transit the state and local government sees fit.

Current policy discourages states and local governments from using transportation dollars for rail.


Fact: Rail passenger service was in private hands from its inception in the 1830s until 1970, when Congress and the Nixon Administration made a policy decision to create Amtrak because the private sector could not make a profit. The private sector operators that have expressed an interest in operating rail passenger service will do so for a fee with the clear expectation that the government will absorb the associated losses.

Furthermore, most Amtrak route miles are on tracks whose owners, the private freight railroads, do not want to run their own passenger trains and have a top priority of opposing legislation that would give Amtrak’s rights (for track access at reasonable cost) to any other entity. The practical result of shutting down Amtrak would be elimination of intercity passenger rail service.

7. Myth: Flying is cheaper than taking a long-distance train.

Fact: Anyone with a computer can find a train fare that is less than an airfare, or an airfare that is less than a train fare. Long-distance trains don’t just go from one major market to another like flights do, but serve many intermediate markets with poor air service (or no air service, or very expensive air service). Furthermore, the walk-up fare for an Amtrak trip is often considerably less than walk-up airfare. There are also people who cannot or do not want to fly.

8. Myth: One particular route (e.g., the Kentucky Cardinal with service between Chicago and Louisville) shows the entire national system is flawed.

Fact: The Kentucky Cardinal was instituted in 1999 to grow express package business. The profitable business never materialized and Amtrak discontinued the route on July 6. Despite limited ridership, no community wants its passenger train to disappear. Residents of Louisville recently filed a class action suit against Amtrak and the U.S. Department of Transportation to bring back the route.

9. Myth: The overwhelming majority of Americans have chosen the automobile lifestyle.

Fact: To a large extent, this apparent “choice” reflects a necessary response to pro-highway federal policies, which for decades encouraged state and local decisions that foster reliance on the automobile.

States, naturally influenced in choosing transportation projects by the federal funding available for those projects, can obtain generous federal matches, often 80 to 90 percent of a project’s total cost. There is no federal match for states to develop rail projects.

The public’s interest in more travel choices is reflected both in the aforementioned polls and in ridership growth at Amtrak over five straight years (fiscal 1997-2001) and in mass transit. On April 17, 2001, the Washington Post reported, “Mass transit ridership grew faster than highway use for the third year in a row last year, according to new national figures.” Also, at a June 27, 2003, conference on traffic congestion, American Public Transportation Association President William Millar stated: “Since 1995, transit ridership has grown by 21 percent, versus 16 percent for driving and 12 percent for domestic airlines. More people are taking public transportation now than in the last 40 years.”

10. Myth: Amtrak labor protection is outrageous.

Fact: Labor protection has no impact on day-to-day operating costs. Labor comes into play when a route or a terminal or shop is closed. In other words, the more than 2,500 employees at Amtrak in 2002, the last year that did not get labor protection.

Even when a terminal or shop is closed, Amtrak can avoid labor protection simply by letting employees follow their work, and, for employees who choose to do that, paying moving costs within certain limits.

Also, Amtrak employees have never been benefited from stock options, and their pay rates are lower than for similar work at the major freight railroads and at many commuter railroads and other private companies.


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Past President Al H. Chesser, right, administers the oath of office to, left to right, General Secretary and Treasurer Dan Johnson, Assistant President Paul C. Thompson and International President Byron A. Boyd Jr., and the other international officers.

Representing the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority at the convention were, left to right, Victor Baffoni, General Chairperson James Williams and Robert Gonzalez, local chairperson of Local 1563. Gonzalez also was re-elected alternate vice president – bus west.

Representing the Long Island Rail Road were, left to right, Joachim Melo Jr., Alternate Vice President–Commuter and General Chairperson Mike Canino and Alternate Vice President–Commuter Robert Celebre.

Local 1594 Delegate Ron Koran, representing members employed on the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, asks for recognition by the chair.

Carl Cochran, who serves the union both as delegate from Local 1138 and as Florida state legislative director, makes a point while George W. Boone Jr., the delegate from Local 1522, waits to speak.

From left, Alternate Vice President South Jerry Batton with Vice Presidents Roy Boling and David Holley. All were re-elected by acclamation.

Vice Presidents Carl Vahldick, Bruce Wigen, Rich Marcus and Amy Martin. All were returned to office by acclamation.

Vice President – Yardmasters Don Carver, center, who announced his retirement at the convention, speaks with newly elected Alternate Vice President – Yardmasters J.R. Cumby, left, who will serve as alternate vice president – yardmasters, and J.R. Cumby, who will serve as alternate vice president – yardmasters.

The Long Island Rail Road was well represented by, left to right, Joachim Melo Jr., delegate from Local 722; Lawrence Melker, president and local chairperson of Local 645; Alternate Vice President–Commuter and General Chairperson Mike Canino and Alternate Vice President–Commuter Robert Celebre.

Delegates, including Local 233 Delegate Terry Dobson, left, and Local 1166 Delegate Kevin Harris, right, learn amendments to the union’s constitution are discussed.

Alternate U.S. National Legislative Director James A. Stem Jr. (left) and Alternate U.S. National Legislative Director James J. Brandenberg.

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UTU for Life

RRB submits to Congress generally favorable reports

CHICAGO — Barring a sudden, unanticipated, large decrease in railroad employment or substantial investment losses, the Railroad Retirement system will experience no cash-flow problems during the next 19 years, according to the triennial 22nd actuarial valuation and the annual financial reports submitted to Congress by the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB).

The generally favorable reports, which project the health of the retirement and unemployment insurance systems based on optimistic, moderate and pessimistic employment assumptions, recommended no financing changes for either system.

The valuation report, which addressed the retirement system's financing during the next 75 years, noted that the "long-term stability of the system, however, is not assured," the RRB said last month. "Under the current financing structure, actual levels of railroad employment and investment returns over the coming years will determine whether additional corrective action is necessary.

While the valuation of the pension system under the optimistic and moderate employment assumptions indicated no cash-flow problems throughout the 75-year projection period, cash-flow problems "do occur under the pessimistic assumption," the RRB said. "However, even under that assumption the cash-flow problems do not occur until 2022."

According to the reports, by the end of fiscal year 2002, the net position of the Railroad Retirement trust funds was $18.7 billion, while that of the railroad unemployment insurance system was $15.8 million.

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Tax reduction boosts some RRB benefits

By V.M. “Butch” Speakman Jr.

CHICAGO — The recently enacted Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003 claimed a large number of allowances and chose equivalent benefits or for those annuitants who claimed a large number of allowances and chose to the annuity portions in excess of Social Security Tier I benefits. There are no changes for those who did not receive the mailing or contact the UTU in advance by calling (216) 228-9400 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. EDT.

The Final Call

Following are the names of recently deceased retirees who maintained annual membership in the UTU For Life program (formerly known as the UTU Retiree Program), according to reports received at UTU International Headquarters. These brothers and sisters will be missed by their many friends and by fellow UTU For Life members.

UTU for Life events set for Philadelphia

Retired members and their spouses are invited to attend the upcoming Philadelphia regional meeting at the Wyndham at Franklin Plaza at 15th and Race Streets on Mon., Aug. 25, as special guests of the UTU.

Those attending will hear UTU International President Byron A. Boyd Jr. deliver his state of the union address at 8:30 a.m.; join members and their spouses from across the region at a noon luncheon featuring a guest speaker, and attend a UTU for Life meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Addressing the UTU For Life meeting will be U.S. National Legislative Director James M. Brunkenhoefer, UTU For Life Coordinator Jim Shelley, UTUJA Field Coordinator Joe Fletcher and U.S. Railroad Retirement Representative Geri Clark.

Cost of the luncheon is $10 per person, payable at the UTU registration desk. There is no charge for the UTU For Life meeting.

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The generally favorable reports, which project the health of the retirement and unemployment insurance systems based on optimistic, moderate and pessimistic employment assumptions, recommended no financing changes for either system.

The valuation report, which addressed the retirement system's financing during the next 75 years, noted that the "long-term stability of the system, however, is not assured," the RRB said last month. "Under the current financing structure, actual levels of railroad employment and investment returns over the coming years will determine whether additional corrective action is necessary.

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Should Medicare include a drug benefit?

John O’Brien
L-1290, Chicago, Ill.

“I am a conductor for the Metra commuter railroad in Chicago. I have been doing this job for 23 years. I serve as local legislative representative and vice chairperson for the Illinois State Legislative Board. I think Medicare should cover prescription drugs. Many times seniors must decide between drugs and food. There should be some kind of coverage available. We should pull the reins on the insurance companies and bring drug prices down. When you go to the veterinarian your pet is getting the same drugs at a much lower cost. If you can afford to pay for prescription medications then you should, but, if you can’t, then Medicare should step in.”

Dale McClain
L-1908, Buffalo, N.Y.

“I am a school bus driver and trainer for Lidlaw. I have been driving for 14 years. I think Medicare should cover prescription drugs because they cover other health care benefits. They are always complaining that Medicare does not cover all their needs and many in this area are forced to travel to Canada to get their medicines cheaper. The federal deficit is in the billions of dollars now so what difference will it make? If the elderly use up their Medicare and Medicaid benefits, the government will end up paying for drugs anyway. If a person has worked all their life, they should be able to live in comfort. Their needs should be taken care of.”

Rodney Overgaard
L-161, Seattle, Wash.

“I am a driver with Gray Line of Seattle and have been driving for 16 years. I also am vice local chairperson. I think Medicare should pay for prescription drugs. Medicare should pay a percentage of the cost based on your income. I don’t mind paying more taxes if it goes for a worthwhile cause and this is a worthy cause. There are a lot of people out there who can’t afford to pay retail for drugs. Most people are used to having drugs covered under their health care plan and it’s tough to go from being covered to not being covered. The sad part is your doctor prescribes medication to make you feel better, and you can’t afford it so you feel worse.”

Barry Norman
L-1929, E. St. Louis, Ill.

“I am a conductor on the Alton & Southern, a 21-mile line that runs between E. St. Louis and Mitchell, Ill. I am vice local chairperson and have been in railroading for 35 years. Absolutely Medicare should offer drug coverage. There are retired people who every day must decide between food and drugs and that’s just not right. People travel to Canada all the time to buy drugs that are exactly the same, but cost 30% less. It may cost me in taxes, but the only time I see my tax dollars at work is when the Federal Railroad Administration comes on my property. If Medicare offered drug coverage, at least I’d see my tax dollars do some good.”

**TPEL Honor Roll**

Individuals who have begun contributing to TPEL or increased their donations to $250 or more, per year, during the previous two months.

**PLAYING CLUB ($1,200 OR MORE PER YEAR)**

- Holland, James B. 91 Jacksonville, Fla.

**DOLLAR-A-DAY CLUB ($365 OR MORE PER YEAR)**


**DIAMOND CLUB ($300 OR MORE PER YEAR)**


**PLATINUM CLUB ($1,200 OR MORE PER YEAR)**

- Martin, Daniel G. 60 Newark, N.J.
- Lemmers, Mark Anthony 60 Newark, N.J.

**UTU members ratify contract with NJ Transit**

NEWARK, N.J. — UTU members working on New Jersey Transit have overwhelmingly approved a new three-year contract with the commuter railroad.

More than 90% of eligible voters cast ballots, a remarkable return. The UTU represents more than 1,400 locomotive engineers, on the property. Most are members of Local 60 at Newark, N.J.; locomotive engineers are members of Local 600 at Jersey City, N.J.

The contract is remarkable in that it includes retroactive and current pay raises and improvement in health and welfare coverage as the state is facing a $5-billion deficit.

The agreement includes pay hikes retroactive to July 1, 2001, improvements in eye-care benefits, a clarification of work rules and no major givebacks. The proposal also modifies the distribution of benefits for surviving spouses.

General Chairperson Xavier Williams praised International President Byron A. Boyd Jr. for his continued support during the negotiations.

Williams and the other members of the negotiating team were assisted in the negotiations by Vice President C.A. “Tony” Iannone and New Jersey State Legislative Director Dan O’Connell.

“I think it’s a good agreement given the economic state of New Jersey,” Williams said. “The state is in a deficit and that affects directly, I think we did very well.”

Williams said passenger levels on New Jersey Transit have increased substantially since the events of Sept. 11, 2001, which destroyed the Port Authority Trans Hudson (PATH) station at the World Trade Center.

“Congratulations to the general committee for getting the vote out. They did a good job. There is no doubt in my mind that the UTU speaks for all Operating employees on New Jersey Transit.”

Iannone announced the negotiating team would be right back at work in September, crafting the next proposal for management.
UTU elects Boyd
Continued from page 1
John Babler was re-elected U.S. first alternate vice president – west; Rex Beatty was elected alternate vice president – Canada; Dennis Schuler was re-elected U.S. second alternate vice president – east; John Hancock was re-elected U.S. second alternate vice president – south; and Robert Kerley was elected U.S. second alternate vice president – west.

Re-elected to the U.S. Board of Appeals were Derek Sampson, Jim Shelton and Dale Welch. Also elected were Tom Isaacs, local chairperson of Local 1365, which represents employees on the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority, to represent members in bus service, and Don Seyer, local chairperson of Local 947, which represents members on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe in the central Missouri area, to represent members employed in road service.

Re-elected to the Canadian Board of Appeals were Brian Gleason, Barry McLaugherty and Ed Seagrue.

Executive Board positions also were filled by the delegates. Joseph Boda, Steve Dawson, Craig Good, Jim Huston and John Risch all were re-elected. Mike Anderson was re-elected as alternate to the executive board.

Following are amendments to the UTU constitution adopted by delegates:

The UTU annual directory shall contain the names, addresses, union local numbers and titles (if any) of each delegate and alternate delegate, and the directories shall be mailed to each delegate no later than 120 days prior to the convention;• International officers, general committees, state boards and staff shall submit itemized statements of expenses for reimbursement and shall provide receipts for all items in excess of $24;

• The election of international officers at UTU conventions shall commence no later than the morning of the first Tuesday of the convention;

• Decisions of the board of appeals shall be in writing, contain the pertinent facts involved, provide the rationale for the decision and be furnished to all interested parties.

Also, delegates passed a resolution supporting the policy of President Boyd on designated legal counsel ethics, which previously was published in the UTU News and which appears on the UTU website. That policy will be printed in the back of the UTU constitution.

A special guest of the convention was Bob McKenna, former Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers general chairperson for Canadian Pacific Railway–Lines East. McKenna, who was introduced to delegates by UTU President Boyd, was arbitrarily removed from office by the BLE because he sought to give his members a choice between joining with the UTU or another organization.

“The Canadian locomotive engineers find themselves in a position where their Canadian votes will not be heard” in a BLE-proposed merger with the Teamsters, McKenna said in early July. “Canadian locomotive engineers should control their own destiny. They should determine among themselves if they are to become a very small segment of a large non-rail organization (the Teamsters) or control their own destiny (by joining the predominantly rail UTU).”

McKenna received a standing ovation from the more than 600 delegates. In an emotional thank you, McKenna said he is “committed” to single representation of train and engine service employees (known as “running trades” in Canada). Single representation would not affect the engineers’ craft autonomy within the UTU.

Amtrak future
Continued from page 1
Amtrak. The UTU, which is leading the Amtrak battle on behalf of rail labor – much as it led the successful Railroad Retirement fight – was quoted in one national publication as follows:

“The administration plan is a McDonald’s-type franchise operation. It could permit lobbyists to design a lowest-cost operation rather than one that is customer focused and which emphasizes safety. Rather than a plan for Amtrak’s future, it is a nefarious scheme to create havoc on the freight trains that must be used by passenger trains. The ultimate objective, of course, is to destroy our national intercity railroad passenger network that is overwhelmingly supported by voters and taxpayers. Amtrak’s problem is not operations, but rather a need for sufficient capital. The administration ignores this.”

In early July, House of Representative appropriations sought to provide Amtrak with only about $600 million for the next fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1. UTU asked members, retirees and their families to contact their lawmakers by telephone and e-mail in support of the $1.8 billion Amtrak President David Gunn says is the minimum needed to keep our national intercity railroad passenger network intact.

Those contacts bore fruit. A second vote by House appropriators raised the amount to $900 million – but still well short of what is needed. Continued calls and e-mails to lawmakers can overcome some of the hard-line cuts. UTU wrote Amtrak financially or engage in union-busting by supporting the administration’s break-up. Amtrak plan, UTU members rescued Railroad Retirement reform from the conservatives; UTU members now can rescue Amtrak from the conservatives.

“The matter is far from over,” said UTU National Legislative Director James Brunkenhoefer. “As John Belushi once said, ‘It’s not over until we say it’s over.’”

“Amtrak funding and Amtrak survival isn’t just about Amtrak jobs – it’s about the solvency and survival of the Railroad Retirement system, because without Amtrak and its almost 25,000 employees, Railroad Retirement could be in danger of insolvency,” Brunkenhoefer said.

Here is how to contact your lawmakers:

Go to the UTU Internet home page at www.utu.org; click on “Washington Updates” in the red box to the left; then click on “Contacting the Congress”; click on your state in the map shown, or enter your address and ZIP code.

If you don’t have Internet access, call your state legislative director or the UTU Washington office at (202) 543-7714 for details on how to contact your lawmaker.

UTU seeks vote
Continued from page 1
The move for a vote on single representation was first urged by one of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers’ most trusted members, who said locomotive engineers should have a choice among themselves if they are to become a very small segment of a large non-rail organization (the Teamsters) or control their own destiny (by joining the predominantly rail UTU).”

Lou Schillaci, UTU general chairperson for CP–Lines West, said, “If mergers are a necessity, logic dictates the UTU and the BLE, which both represent members on the same track, unite as one to be number one.”

If the UTU is certified as the bargaining agent, craft autonomy will be preserved, Schillaci said.

“The current local committees of adjustment in the various divisions of the BLE will remain intact. Locomotive engineers will continue to have their representation. Their general committees of adjustment will remain intact. The same committees that have bargained for the past 10 years together will continue to bargain.”

Articles 80 and 82 of the UTU constitution provide for the preservation of independent representation for locomotive engineers.

This guarantees that the authority and jurisdiction of each committee will be protected.

In other words, all the BLE elected local chairpersons, vice local chairpersons and secretaries of local committees will remain the same.

“The history of the United Transportation Union, born through unification of four major rail unions, is one of uniting for the betterment of the membership.” Schillaci said.

“The UTU is primarily a rail transportation union where we represent other employees. We do not represent those who compete with railroads. As for Canada, all dues paid in Canada remain in Canada.”
Got Grandkids?

As parents and grandparents, we do everything we can for our children and grandchildren. After all, we want what is best for them. We buy them clothing and toys and any number of gifts. When they get older, we provide them with spending money to purchase the things they would like. But many gifts go out of style or outlive their usefulness and there is little to show in the end for our hard-earned dollars.

Many of us want to give our children and grandchildren something they can keep for the rest of their lives, but it is often difficult to find just the right gift.

Permanent life insurance is a wonderful way to provide a lifetime gift and is very inexpensive at young ages. Best of all, permanent life insurance provides a living benefit, since it builds cash values which can be used later in life for emergencies, the down payment on a home, or for any other worthwhile purpose.

Give a gift that keeps on giving. Call us today at 1-800-558-8842, or complete and return the coupon below to receive more information.

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